HARAMBEE

FLAME

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A Question Of Role Models

Last month, Arsenio Hall gave his little commentary on the issue of reparations payments by the U.S. government to African folks here, informing us that the government need not pay him because he hadn't picked any cotton. Some of us may have thought that he wouldn't be able to top that. Some of us were wrong. On Friday, March 17, he had some Caucasian actress on his show. She sat down next to our boy and damned near immediately commenced to throwing her legs all over the place, giving shots to the audience then to Arsenio. Next thing we knew, Arsenio, whose eyes had grown to the size of half-dollars, was taking the woman's shoes off. Lo and behold, Arsenio spent the rest of the interview massaging the woman's feet. Is that hip, or what? Arsenio, a graduate(with honors) of the Nipsey Russell/Ben Vereen College of Black Male Role Modeling, has, in just a few months, advanced the cause of contemporary lackeyism by those proverbial "leaps and bounds." No doubt, an N.A.A.C.P. Image Award is being polished up for him at this very moment.

And then, there is this James Cheek, the president of Howard University. The man must have had a stroke--of genius, that is. In supporting Lee Atwater's election to membership on the Howard University board of trustees, Cheek showed the kind of pin-headed(sharp?) leadership we've learned to expect from those of us who have a tradition of seeking to be hand-fed and licking the hand that feeds us. Several hundred of Howard University's African students, however, apparently not into either hand-licking or rallying behind such activity, seized the Mordecai Wyatt Johnson administration building and otherwise demonstrated against Atwater's membership on the Howard board of trustees, eventually forcing Atwater's resignation.

Numerous journalists and sociologists referred to the '70s and early to mid-'80s as the time of the

"me generation." Unquestionably, many African folks here in the States were into the individualism that so characterized this period. Like their counterparts in the dominant Caucasian majority, they carried the sacrificing of principle and dignity for hopes of upward mobility to new levels of refinement to the point where Tomming has become chic..

There was a time, not too many years ago,.when African people in this country would be hesitant to sell us out or demean us in public and/or would feel uncomfortable and embarrassed if they did put on such public displays. Of course, there were exceptions to this. But now, with all the favorable attention awaiting them from right-wing Caucasian politicians and foundations, some African folks looking to "get over" are not only not hesitant to sacrifice principle and dignity but jump enthusiastically at the chance to show their loyalty to their Caucasian patrons, actual or potential, and collect their rewards.

This selling out of the interests of African people and demeaning of us by African public officials, spokespersons, and so forth has served to set a regrettable standard. Is it not this same standard that is being followed by our "undesirable elements"--those, for example, who have turned African communities in Washington, D.C. into veritable outdoor slaughterhouses? If those of us who have "made it" have no respect for us and exhibit this lack of consciousness publicly, how is it that we would expect those of us who have not "made it" - particularly, in a society that places such value on what people have rather than who and what they are - to have respect for us, indeed, for themselves?

In responding to criticism about his reparations remarks, Arsenio Hall stated, among other things, "Afterall, I am a comedian." Yes, he <u>is</u> a comedian. Wilson Goode <u>is</u> a politician. Roy Innis <u>is</u>

a spokesman. All of us have our parts to play and functions to fulfill. But whether we like it or not, we are not playing these parts and fulfilling these roles in some kind of individual isolation from the rest of our people, from our interests. The idea that we're just doing our own thing notwithstanding, the words we say and positions we take, in the public arena especially, have an impact on us collectively.

We do not have an obligation to all think alike. But we do have an obligation to know what we're talking about when we speak, to have studied and deliberated about the issues we comment on, and to put at least what we perceive to be the best interests of African people ahead of our own personal advantage, or perceived advantage. What we have is a serious case of African folks running off at the mouth while having little to say worth our listening to.

Clearly, some of this nonsensical talk by some of our Brothers and Sisters comes from their having personal agendas. But much of it comes from ignorance, plain and simple ignorance. Whether we're speaking of our super-star status athletes, our comedians or other entertainers, politicians, or whatever, we're speaking of persons who generally have little or no knowledge of our history prior to the Middle Passage and very limited awareness of our history since. In addition, it is readily apparent that these folks commonly lack any understanding of the various economic and political forces that interlock to maintain the status quo relative to the conditions of African folks here in the U.S. and elsewhere.

The appearance by African folks on the "Oprah Winfrey Show," "Donahue," gives them access to literally millions of African folks' minds. And it is often the case that we associate a person's appearance on television with credibility on the part of

that person. Talk show hosts and television reporters know this well and make good(from their perspectives) use of our politicians, entertainers, etc. to further their particular agendas. One of their most popular ploys, when some Brother or Sister has made a statement, taken a position, or proposed an action or program viewed by some segment or other of the Caucasian Establishment as repugnant and/or undesirable, is that of calling upon some other African to publicly attempt to discredit the person who has put forth the controversial statement or attack the value of that person's proposal as not being reflective of the the feelings of the "mainstream 'black' community."

We can provide ourselves with some level of preventive medicine against the public use - through media - of our people against us by going after one of the root causes of some Brothers' and Sisters' vulnerability to such use. We need to set up a special education program for our public figures: athletes, entertainers, politicians, etc. by which they can be made aware of our history; gain an understanding of relevant political, economic, and cultural structures and how those structures affect African people and the conditions we face; and be exposed to an Afrocentric value system.

This program could be established as a kind of big Brother/big Sister institution whereby our public figures would agree to having what we might call "cultural advisors" assigned to them for a specified amount of time for the purpose of bringing enlightenment to them. By doing this, we would be attacking the ignorance and lack of allegiance to us which is characteristic of too many of those of us who speak, supposedly, on our behalf.

-Mondo/Editor

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.) is a pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exceptiion to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems that make effective use of imagery, that have beauty and power, and do not sacrifice such for sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme.

Send submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME
Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org
Attn: Editor/Mondo
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68502-0500

From Other Sources

African-American Radio: Talk Shows On The Rise

..."Politicians are among the first to recognize the power of this relatively new format, but the cat is now out of the bag. In many major U.S. cities, black talk radio is being monitored by journalists, police departments, advertisers, marketers, demographers, pollsters and hosts of others interested - for reasons good and ill - in the preferences and proclivities of African-Americans. Talk radio is booming in the general market as well, but its importance is amplified in a community historically denied media access...

"Lampel(David Lampel, program director of WLIB-AM in New York City), who is also a senior vice president of Inner City Broadcasting--the black-run company that owns WLIB and WBLS-FM--says WLIB jumped from 'a faint speck to among the highest-rated AM stations in the metropolitan area' on the strength of its talk format...Like most other talk formats, audience call-ins form the basis of the program's content...

"A similar transformation has occurred in Chicago. 'We went from no ratings to the top 20 after changing to a talk format in March 86', says Hoyett Owens, general manager of Chicago's black-owned WVON-AM...

"Indeed, many commentators credit the station with forging one of the most purposeful black electorates in the U.S...

"The market segmentation of black talk radio's audience bespeaks an increasing commercial interest in the format's soaring popularity...

"Additional evidence of black talk radio's new

prominence was provided when New York City's police department revealed it regularly monitored WLIB-AM to get advance word on protest demonstrations or other civil disruptions...

"Journalists who regularly monitor these shows are afforded rare glimpses into the internal dynamics of the black community. This saves them considerable legwork even as it enhances their coverage of African-American affairs...

"Many observers liken the growing influence of black talk radio to that exerted by the black press during its golden era of the early 20th century. The programming format has changed the game of urban politics forever in the cities where it's currently playing..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Black Talk Radio Sends Powerful, Clear Signals," which appears on page 7 of the 3/15-21/89 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago, ILL.).

Africans Flex Electoral Muscles In Small Ga. Town

"The small town of Keysville, Ga., where residents last year elected their own government for the first time in half a century, remains under community control. The six African-Americans running on the 'Progressive Slate', swept into City Hall by a 2-1 margin over a nearly all-white opposition ticket in January.

"It was the second time in two years that a majority Black slate won in the rural town of 400. In the 1988 election, the first in Keysville since 1933, African-American candidates won five of the six elective posts...

"Since 1933, the city government has been more or less inoperable, allowing the county to provide most services. Keysville Blacks began organizing

in 1985 to reestablish the city government after Burke County firefighters failed to respond to a fire in the Black section. Whites opposed Black efforts to attain such basic services as water, sewers and garbage collection because they feared higher taxes and the consolidation of Black political power.

"Since last year's victory, African-Americans in other rural Georgia towns have sought advice from Keysville leaders on organizing similar efforts.

..."After last year's victory, the white opposition's legal challenges to the original court decision allowing the elections went to the Supreme Court, which rejected a request to hear the case and sent it back to the U.S. District Court in Atlanta. The lower court continues to reexamine the case although its initial action still stands, accorddng to Gail Korotkin of the Christic Institute South..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Keyesville Black Slate Swamps Opponent," which appears on page 7 of the 3/8/89 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.).

Old Glory Under The Gun

"A storm of controversy broke at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and spilled onto the front pages last week as art students stood their ground against the efforts of jingoistic veterans' groups to suppress a bold artwork which features an American flag draped on the floor. As we go to press, the art exhibit has been the target of disruptions, demonstrations, vandalism, and counter-protests for more than a week. And on Saturday, March 4 an Illinois state senator filed for criminal charges at the state level against the museum and the artist for 'desecration of the flag'. And one woman has been arrested and charged with felony flag desecration...

"The work is part of a minority student art exhibit, 'A Part of the Whole'--the first exhibit featuring the works of Black, Latin, and Asian students to be held at the school in ten years. The artist, a Black student, calls himself 'Dread Scott' Tyler after the infamous 'Dred Scott Decision' of 1857 which demanded the return of runaway slaves...

"Dread Scott defended his work: '...I chose this piece because I feel that it represented the hopes and aspirations of many oppressed minorities both here and internationally...Before the opening I was asked to withdraw this piece after it was accepted. The reasons for this request included the argument that the piece desecrated a 'venerated object'. This flag is a symbol of the U.S. nation and as such is not venerated by many Black people and other oppressed people arund the world, in fact it is despised. This after all was the flag which was carried by the U.S. calvary as they massacred the Native American Indians and Mexicans to steal their land. It is the flag which is worn on the shoulders of many policemen as they murder and oppress Black people. It is the flag which was painted on the side of 'Fat Man', the atomic bomb which murdered tens of thousands of people in Hiroshima. This is the flag which, when people rebel internationally, from Palestine to Peru, from South Africa to South Korea, from Vietnam to Iran to the U.S., is one of the first things which is torched...'"

-Above passages excerpted from "Dread Scott Vs. The Flag Wavers," which appears on page 4 of the 3/6/89 REVOLUTIONARY WORKER(Chicago, ILL).

Rappers Address Violence in African Communities

"In response to the devastating impact of Black-on-Black violence, New York City rap musicians have put together rap's first benefit album. The Stop

the Violence Movement(STV), a coalition of popular hip-hop stars and friends, was formed last November with a dual purpose: to raise consciousness among their fans about the 'real causes and social cost' of Black-on-Black crime and to answer doubts about rap's positive value for inner-city kids.

"Proceeds from the collaborative record 'Self Destruction'--which premiered on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday--will go to the National Urban League to 'support and develop programming dealing with Black-on-Black crime and youth education'...

"To promote 'Self Destruction's' use as an educational tool, STV has designed a number of complementary projects. These include a booklet of questions designed to stimulate classroom discussion of the issues raised by the record and an essay contest encouraging kids to write about the problem and possible solutions to it. Also currently in the works is a speaking tour of schools and a long-form video discussing Black-on-Black crime..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Wha' Sup? Tappin Rap To Tell The Tale," which appears on page 20 of the 3/15/89 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.).

Establishment Of United African College Fund Proposed By Courier Editor

..."The proposal is simple: begin with three sites in Africa to serve as headquarters to recruit continental brothers and sisters to attend historically Black colleges and universities here in America. I proposed then that the three countries be Nigeria, Mozambique and Zambia. However, any three countries would serve as a barometer of interest and commitment, and would serve a number of positive functions for Africans throughout the diaspora.

"First, as with the BCRA(Black College Recruitment Association) here in Milwaukee, the UACF would recruit African brothers and sisters, with their financial support coming from those nations. In increasing these numbers of Black college campuses here, we begin bridging the gap that exists between the Motherland and many of our 'educated' brothers and sisters here in the Anglo-American colonies.

"Secondly, we provide Black colleges with an international source of revenue and, in doing so, we show the prospects and potential of linking up and engaging in other projects much like what UW-Madison boasts of in its recruitment of students and scholars from Moscow.

"Third, this proposed project would be a clear-cut example of self-determination(kujichagulia): Blacks educating Blacks. Since African brothers and sisters are coming here anyway, it is more logical to have them educated by 'their own' than at white campuses who haven't convincingly displayed the capacity to deal with Blacks born here, let alone brothers and sisters born on the Continent.

"Fourth, and somewhat related to my first point, we can dispel myths about one another. The sympo-

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sium on African relations(held on Feb. 28 and sponsored by the UW-Milwaukee African Students' Union) clearly showed that there is much being done to divide us, because those in power understanddthat in unity there is strength. By studying, working, partying and growing together, we can acquire a more profound understanding of the

nature of our oppression and, more importantly, work together on solutions to rid ourselves of it.

"Fifth, the United African College Fund is in line with the 'world economy' that we are living in. With a plethora of nations now being bound by trade, economic development and sociopolitical issues, Africans here and on the Continent must become closer than ever before. Others identify with homelands, and we can do no less..."

-Above passages excerpted from "The United African College Fund: Toward A Global Contribution," which appears on page 4 of the 3/4/89 MILWAUKEE COURIER.

AIDS: A Manufactured Disease?

"...a report in the LONDON TIMES suggested last year that the (AIDS)epidemic may have been triggered by a smallpox vaccine administered by a worldwide health organization..

"According to a front-page article in the May 11, 1987 LONDON TIMES, an official from the World Health Organization, which masterminded the 13-year campaign to eradicate smallpox in Haiti, revealed that scientific evidence suggests that 'immunization from the smallpox vaccine Vaccinia awakened the unsuspected, dormant human inmuno defense virus infection(HIV)'...

"Experts such as Dr. Robert Strecker, a Los Angeles physician who treats over 60 AIDS patients, fear that in destroying one illness, another was created, only more deadly and virtually untreatable.

Strecker states, in reports of his various studies on the subject, that the AIDS virus was derived from animal viruses, cultured in the human tissues and adapted to humans for possible chemical and biological warfare...

"The doctor is convinced that the virus was engineered and could have contaminated the vaccine used by the WHO(World Health Organization) to wipe out smallpox in Africa and Hepatitis B in America. .."

-Above passages excerpted from "Blacks Intentionally Infected," which appears on pages 1 and 19 of the 3/9/89 LOS ANGELES SENTINEL.

Rise Of Islamic Fundamentalism In Egypt

..."Though Egypt remains presumably the most secular of the Arab states, the country is being profoundly influenced by an ever-spreading wave of Islamic fundamentalism...

"In the early '70s, President Anwar Sadat tried to counter leftist activity at universities by encouraging fundamentalist groups to spread their word. Today, Islamic groups dominate the student elections. And these groups provide student services, like discounted rates on books. Fundamentalists have also taken control of several important professional organizations for doctors, lawyers and engineers...

"Many Egyptians have given up on both socialism, which they equate with late President Gamal Nasser's failed statist policies, and capitalism, whose ugly incarnation as Sadat's Open Door Policy they hold responsible for Egypt's present economic plight...

"...a wide network of Islamic self-help institutions has sprung up, challenging the inefficiency of government services. Thousands of fundamentalist-operated medical clinics and schools provide services for the poor that outshine decaying government facilities...

"...there is no doubt that the traditional hold on

power by Egypt's political class--an exclusive, Westernized urban elite--is becoming more precarious."

-Above passages excerpted from "Egypt Confronts The Rising Crescent Of Islamic Fundamentalism," which appears on page 5 of the 3/15-21 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago, ILL).

Movement Toward Namibian Independence Marked By Contradictions

"Namibia inched a little closer to independence this month as members of the UN Transitional Assistance Group(Untag) began arriving in the territory.

"On March 1 the UN General Assembly finally approved a budget of $416 million for Untag, which includes peacekeeping troops from Australia, Finland, Denmark, Kenya, Britain and Malaysia. Administrative personnel are being supplied from Poland, Canada, Spain and Italy, while from Switzerland comes a 150-strong medical corps.

"But Untag is already seriously compromised by the supposedly cost-cutting maneuvers of the five permanent Security Council members(the U.S., USSR, China, France and Britain). This has resulted in the cutback of Untag's military component from the 7500 troops originally envisaged in Security Council Resolution 435 on Namibian independence, to just 4650...

"A row is still simmering over the UN's decision to purchase supplies from South Africa for Untag, despite the UN's own embargoes against trade with the racist state...

"And it still seems likely that Untag will buy its fuel from South Africa. This is despite offers from Angola and Congo to sell Untag fuel..."

-3/22/89 THE GUARDIAN

Back In Time

An outpost of the Greek Empire, the fortress of Ceuta, rested on the northern tip of Morocco. This door to Iberia(Spain) was guarded by Count Julian, an ally of Roderick, ruler of Iberia. Count Julian fought off all Arab/Moorish attacks, and his fortress remained impregnable until Julian, for personal reasons, switched his allegiance from Roderick of the Visigoths to Musa Nosseyr of the Moors.

Tradition has it that Roderick, while responsible for Julian's daughter's welfare during her training at his court, broke his trust and took advantage of her sexually. Julian, furious at this betrayal, quickly reclaimed his daughter and sought out Musa. Julian proclaimed to the Arab governor his intent to ally himself completely with Musa for the purpose of conquering the rich lands of Spain. He offered his own ships along with his knowledge of Roderick's defenses. While consulting with his Khalif, Musa sent an exploratory mission, of five hundred soldiers led by the black Moor Tariq. After the reconnaissance mission returned, a success, in July of 710, Musa prepared to conquer Spain in earnest...

On April 30, 711 A.D., Tariq crossed the straits of Hercules with his 7000 men, of which "6700 (were) native (Moorish) Africans and 300 (were) Arabs." After landing on the Spanish coast, Tariq seized a great cliff and a portion of land around it. Deeming it strategically important, he directed the building of a fortress on the site. Tradition holds that his men named the fortress after him out of admiration and respect. The name Gabel Tariq, or General Tariq, was later corrupted to "Gibraltar," and its fortress known as the "Rock of Gibraltar."

-Source: AFRICAN PRESENCE IN EARLY EUROPE, Edited by Ivan Van Sertima

Announcements

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization banquet will be held on May 7 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the State Prison in Lincoln, Nebraska(14th & Pioneer Blvd). If you're interested in attending, please write to us or call. The mailing address is: Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500. The telephone number is 471-3161. Ask for extension 380 and call between the hours of 12:30 and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

HIDDEN HERITAGE is a catalog we recently received which lists and pictures a variety of products designed for American-born African children, including: AFRO-BETS BOOK OF BLACK HEROES(49 Black heroes--from Ira Aldrige to Shaka Zulu), Innervision Board Game(..the fun way for you and the entire family to expand your knowledge of Black history and culture...4,800 questions and answers covering the contributions of Black people to art/literature, culture/geography and more...), and several other products for American-born African children, and adults as well. Make inquiries to Hidden Heritage; 1142 West Indian School Road; Phoenix, Arizona; 85013-9962. Or call the toll free number: 1-800-443-0100(Ext. 221).

AFRICAN AMERICAN IMAGES is another source of educational materials for American-born African childdren. LESSONS FROM HISTORY: A CELEBRATION IN BLACKNESS by Jawanza Kunjufu, which is available in elementary, junior and senior high-school, and teacher's editions, is an excellent textbook. African American Images offers a variety of books for children, as well as both audio and video cassettes. For more information, write to: African American Images; 9204 Commercial, Suite 308; Chicago, ILL; 60617. For wholesale orders, call: 1-312-375-9682.

Basketball

man a come out widda rag
to sop up de puddles a sweat
drip droppy ina flood
from de men stanna so high
make a you wonder what kinda de mud
god molda deez men from
deez tree limb arm
an log laig warriors a crashin
ina mid air high above
de zebra men widda whistles cocked to blow
ana eart shakin boom
when deez titans hit de flo
ana you watch deez men wid yo eyes
a bulgin so big space a wide
an astoundament rushin roun inside a ya
like a de flowers ina rush to bus troo
de tremblin soil afta de spring rains come
ana somebody win
somebody lose
it make a no difference anyway
when you getta de big kick
justa watch de giants play.

-Mondo